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SUBJECT: Media Reaction - Lebanon and Hezbollah

On May 22, the independent liberal Stockholm morning daily "Dagens Nyheter" ran an editorial column by Per Jonsson headlined "Another Triumph for Hezbollah":

"The peril, which possibly could have resulted in a full-blown civil war, now seems to have been temporarily removed. Wednesday's agreement on Lebanon's future mediated by the small oil sheikdom Qatar is remarkably concrete in details. And it also was supported by all relevant political factions in the country, which is even more remarkable....

"But in reality Hezbollah is the obvious victor. Most strikingly by its return into a coalition government, holding 11 out of 30 seats, after being subject to 18 months of boycott.

"From a realpolitik point of view it is even more important that the well-equipped and well-trained Hezbollah militia now will be officially authorized to keep its weapons...which means that - after an 18 year ban against armed militia movements in Lebanon and two 'binding' UN Security Council resolutions - Hezbollah's demands for upholding an independent war organization are now recognized....

"Thus, the protg of Syria and Iran, the worst enemy of Israel, and President George W. Bush's object of hatred, has won yet another grandiose political triumph. And that will certainly not make the Middle East a more secure place."  
WOOD